

# 5

## Life Skills

- ☐ Values
- ☐ Anger Management and  
Conflict Resolution
- ☐ Decision Making
- ☐ Communication  
and Interpersonal  
Relationships
- ☐ Stress Management
- ☐ Self-Esteem / Self-Image
- ☐ Support Systems
- ☐ Creating a Personal Action  
Plan

## **LIFE SKILLS**

**PURPOSE/GOAL:** To encourage participants to consider improving their life skills and giving them the tools to reduce the potential for “high-risk” behaviors.

**OBJECTIVES:** To help participants to examine their values and to understand how those values affect their lives.

To help participants manage their anger and improve their conflict-resolution skills.

To improve participants’ decision making skills.

To work on participants’ interpersonal skills and communication.

To help participants reduce their stress levels and maintain them at a manageable levels.

To improve participants’ self-esteem and self-image.

To assist participants in developing and maintaining support systems.

## **INTRODUCTION**

There is a high correlation between substance abuse and life skills. People who have developed strong, positive life skills tend not to abuse alcohol and other drugs. Following that, if we wish to help substance abusers with their substance abuse problems, we need to help them develop and improve their life skills. In this section, we will look at:

- Values
- Anger Management/Conflict Resolution
- Decision-Making
- Communication
- Stress Management
- Self-Esteem
- Support Systems
- Personal Action Planning

Substances are sometimes used to escape stressful situations or to reduce tensions. Substance abuse can be the reliance on substances as the “solution” to a variety of problems/stresses. As the frequency and quantity of substance abuse rises, there is a lessening ability and motivation to look to other possible solutions, either short- or long-term.

Increasing a person’s life skills allows him/her to deal with problems/stresses without recourse to alcohol and other drugs. The following section will attempt to increase the participants’ skills in a number of important areas. These life-skill areas often overlap and relate to one another. As we get stronger in one area, we get stronger in other areas as well.

## **VALUES**

**PURPOSE/GOAL:** Participants are encouraged to take a look at their own values to produce life-style changes that are more effective and lead to personal readiness.

**OBJECTIVE:**

- To clarify personal values
- To identify how personal values are chosen and can be in conflict with the values of others
- To recognize how values are acted upon in positive and negative ways

## **INTRODUCTION**

A value is something that is important to you. It is something on which you spend time, energy and money. There are countless examples of values (see handout Personal Values List).

*Ask participants to consider what they have accomplished in the last 10 years. Ask them to write down five of what they consider to be their major accomplishments. Discuss the relationship to values.*

*Ask participants to consider the next 10 years and to list five long-term goals, achievements they want to accomplish during the next 10 years. Discuss (1) the relationship of those goals to values, and (2) the influence those goals will have on participants' lives.*

One's life goals are dependent upon one's values. Therefore, to set meaningful goals, one should first examine his or her values. A starting point for such an examination is to explore past accomplishments and identify the ones that seem the most important. The accomplishments a person chooses as important will most likely reflect that person's values. For example, a person who considers his or her successful marriage a major accomplishment probably assigns great value to family; one who takes pride in his or her ability as the "bread winner" undoubtedly lists a sense of responsibility as an important value.

Planned future accomplishments, or goals, tend to give purpose and direction to one's life, and future goals also reflect one's values. For example, if one's goal is to complete a college degree, he or she probably values education. By the same token, pursuit of that degree will direct the student's life to some extent, in the short term as well as the long term.

## SHORT- AND LONG-TERM GOALS

Almost anything one plans to accomplish can be considered a goal; the immediate ones are the short-term goals. Some are clearly more urgent than others, and some are more important to the accomplishment of long-term goals than others.

*Now ask participants to consider the immediate future—their short-term goals. Ask them to list five goals they want to accomplish by tomorrow, five they want to accomplish by the weekend, and five they hope to accomplish within the next year. Discuss which, if any, of the year's goals depend on or relate even slightly to the shorter-term goals.*

*Compare long-term goals to short-term goals. Have participants put an asterisk by any of the short-term goals that will contribute to long-term goals. Have them underscore short-term goals that might impede accomplishment of their long-term goals.*

After long-term goals have been identified, the steps one takes to accomplish those goals become short-term goals. By setting short-term goals, we break the larger task (long-term goal) into manageable parts. Continuing with the example of obtaining a college degree, we can suggest that successfully completing each of the required courses one by one — or a few each term — is a logical short-term goal. From another standpoint, earning or saving the money to register for each class might be a more preliminary short-term goal. An immediate goal might be to obtain the next term's schedule of courses or a list of correspondence courses. In any case, some short-term goals must contribute to the accomplishment of the long-term goals; when none of them do, time can be wasted and long-term goals can be derailed. For example, a person who sets the college degree as a long-term goal

would diminish chances of its accomplishment by responding to a short-term goal of “just having a good time for a while.”

When short-term goals are incompatible with long-term goals, two distinct choices are available for making them compatible: (1) change the long-term goal to accommodate the short-term goal, or (2) change the short-term goals to accommodate the long-term goal. The first choice often means settling for less in terms of the future in exchange for immediate gratification. The second means focusing immediate objectives toward accomplishing the long-term goals.

*Discuss ways of making short-term goals compatible with long-term goals. Encourage use of examples that can be developed and analyzed in terms of short-term steps toward long-term accomplishments.*

*Conclude this discussion by connecting it with substance abuse. Elicit examples of how immediate gratification through substance abuse jeopardizes long-term goals.*

*Challenge participants to maximize their potential instead of sacrificing their dreams through abuse of alcohol and drugs.*

I value something when I:

- Freely choose it from alternatives
- Consider consequences (negative or positive)
- Publicly confirm it
- Prize and cherish it (like it )
- Do it repeatedly, or believe it consistently

For example:

Imagine that you value “getting high.” Explain how you got that value? What influenced you to value this behavior? Is this value ever in conflict with other values? If there is conflict, how do you resolve it?

*Break group into dyads, have them process their answers and then present the to the class on newspaper script. Facilitator processes the key issue: Where did this value come from? What influenced you to have this value? When did it start? How freely did you choose and continue to use this value? Will it always be a value? Why do people keep or change values? Does the value you choose always get acted on? What if it's important to you to be respected, but you got caught on a UA test? What happens to the value of "getting high?" How can you change the pattern of your life values? Why do people keep them? What does commitment have to do with values?*

### Activity 1

Participants look at list of values and choose at least 3 values that fit their behavior. They are asked to identify which values are in conflict, and which ones are they not acting on. Which values would they like to modify and/or act on. They can further identify the mechanics of resolving the conflict.

List of values (handout; participants can add other values):  
 looking good, being smart, getting by, being cool, spending money, saving money, making money, being dependent, being independent, free choice, questioning authority, being educated, going fast, going slow, being different, being like everyone else, being right, being in charge, family, kids, being serious, being respected, taking risks, humor, getting my own way, being fair, trust, loyalty, respect, sexual pleasure, lying, telling the truth, standing out, status, things, high tech things, security, clothes, cars, sex appeal, good looks, relationships, self-discipline

### Activity 2

Participants will fold paper lengthwise into 3 sections so that they will have 6 equal squares. In each square, starting on left, they will depict only in pictures or symbols, the following statements:

1. Things I do well
2. Turning point in my life
3. A low point in my life
4. Something I do well
5. Something I take a firm stand on, and would never budge
6. A peak experience I would like to have

**Trainer Process: Encourage participants to share and engage in self-exploration, clarify their own personal values., and to include values that may be in conflict.**

## **5 LIFE SKILLS - Values**

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## **HANDOUTS**

|                             |              |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Personal Values</b>      | <b>5-133</b> |
| <b>Alcohol and Values</b>   | <b>5-134</b> |
| <b>Identify Your Values</b> | <b>5-135</b> |
| <b>Values</b>               | <b>5-136</b> |
| <b>Value Examples</b>       | <b>5-137</b> |



## PERSONAL VALUES

A value is something that is important to you. It is something on which you spend time, energy, and/or money. There are countless examples of values, some of which are listed below:

looking good      family      having money  
sexual pleasure      taking risks  
being serious      honesty      being right  
self-respect      independence  
getting high      free choice      humor  
freindships      being fair      getting my own way  
being educated      going fast      being smart      getting married  
fitting in      lying      being dependent  
standing out      being popular      trust      winning  
going slow      being cool  
being different      achievement      spending money  
religion      material possessions  
self-discipline      sex appeal      security  
relationships      being creative  
attracting attention      status      getting by  
staying young      questioning authority

Write three personal values of your own that you would be willing to talk about in the class. Use the above examples if they apply to you, or write your own values if they are not included in the list.

1. The **value** \_\_\_\_\_ goes with my **behavior** of \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. The **value** \_\_\_\_\_ goes with my **behavior** of \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. The **value** \_\_\_\_\_ goes with my **behavior** of \_\_\_\_\_ .

## ALCOHOL AND VALUES

Imagine yourself using alcohol in your usual patterns. If you don't use alcohol, imagine yourself in a situation where others are using alcohol. Think about the environment, the substance, the amount consumed, the time span, the people around you, your thoughts, your body responses, and your self-talk.

1. Write down all the things that are important to you — your values — about alcohol.

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

2. Select the three most important things (values) from question #1 above and write them in the boxes under Value.
3. Write the behaviors that go with these values in the boxes under Behavior.
4. Write the self-talk and body responses that are associated with the value-behavior in the boxes.

| Value | goes with | Behavior | Self-talk | Body Response |
|-------|-----------|----------|-----------|---------------|
|       |           |          |           |               |
|       |           |          |           |               |
|       |           |          |           |               |

### Patterns

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|

# Identify Your Values

**Governing Val-  
ues**

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*"Values are the foundation of our character and our confidence.  
A person who does not know what he/she stands for, will never  
enjoy true happiness or success."*

**L. Lionel Kendrick**

# Values

**Heroes:**

**People**

**Qualities You Respect**

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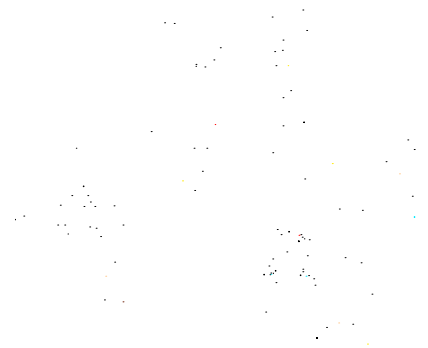
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**Some Examples of VALUE Areas:**

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
|  | Athletics                |
|  | Community                |
|  | Family                   |
|  | Health & Fitness         |
|  | Personality              |
|  | Relationship with Others |
|  | Spiritual                |
|  |                          |
|  |                          |

# Value Examples

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**I am productive**

**I seek excellence**

**I am competent**

**I have a positive attitude**

**I serve others**

**I am frugal**

**I am physically fit**

**I love God**

**I grow intellectually**

**I am generous**

**I am a team player**

**I am honest**

**I am teachable**

**I encourage justice**

**I am organized**

**I seek truth**

**I am a leader**

**I am financially secure**

**I love my family**

**I am self-sufficient**

**I have integrity**

**I am innovative**

